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Chancellor Adenauer Meets Representatives of EKD

(Bonn) - Representatives of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) met with Chancellor Konrad Adenauer late in March to discuss the problem of atomic weapons.

The churchmen, including Bishops Otto Dibelius, Hanns Lilje and Volkmar Herntrich and Church President Joachim Beckmann, called the West German chancellor's attention to the resolutions of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs concerning the whole problem of atomic warfare (see EPS No. 29, 1957). The resolutions, adopted last August, advocated multilateral or unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons, and have been sent to governments by member churches of the WCC.

Dr. Adenauer expressed his full agreement with the five-point programme prepared by the CCIA, and said he considered it one of the main tasks of his government to encourage every possible step towards general disarmament. At the same time, the chancellor said he shared the anxiety of the Evangelical Church and Protestant churches as a whole concerning nuclear tests and the production of atomic weapons. Dr. Adenauer added, however, that it was the duty of the Federal Government to keep in mind the freedom and security of the German people.

E.P.S., Geneva

French Protestant Federation Protests Actions in Algeria

(Paris) - The Council of the French Protestant Federation has protested again against cruelties committed in Algeria. After a meeting in Paris late in March, the Federation said: "These abuses go on constantly. More and more, pastors, teachers and parents tell us about their anxiety that, because of the actions in Algeria, so many young people are becoming confused, sceptical or cynical. For many of these young people this means that they are deprived of the actual meaning of their lives. Whatever judgment one might pronounce on the way of action of Pastor Etienne Mathiot, his gesture was a visible proof of the present atmosphere of anxiety and confusion."

The Federation Council maintained that no one in France has the right to shut himself up in convenient and guilty ignorance, and called on government authorities to put an end to all agitation in Algeria. E.P.S., Geneva

Refugee Pastors Acquitted

(Berlin) - Pastors Hans Gerber and Erich Rommel, who fled from the German Democratic Republic into West Berlin last December, have been acquitted by the Disciplinary Board of the Church of Berlin-Brandenburg. Disciplinary proceedings against the two pastors were begun late in December by their church. At the time the church pointed out that in accordance with his ordination vows every minister must stay with his congregation. However, since the proceedings revealed that the two pastors had been in personal danger, they were not prosecuted.

Authorities said they recognised the directive of the church government that a Protestant pastor should be ready to accept personal suffering and sacrifice as a part of his ministry. They maintained, however, that this could not be imposed on the pastors, but should be left to their own decision and acceptance. E.P.S., Geneva

Two US Church Groups Ask Nuclear Ban

Two national church groups in the United States went on record late in March opposing the testing of nuclear weapons.

The General Brotherhood Board of the Church of the Brethren, meeting in Elgin, Illinois, asked the United States government to use all deliberate speed "to negotiate with the Soviet Union for an end to the testing of nuclear weapons".

Regretting that "the arms race continues unabated", the board, however, commended the US for taking several steps "to help develop an atmosphere of trust and confidence between our nation and Russia". The steps cited were participation in the international agency for peaceful uses of atomic energy, the International Geophysical Year and a cultural exchange agreement. The board said: "The Christian conscience calls for a halt and a retreat from the present suicidal arms race while there is yet time and opportunity".

Meeting in Dayton, Ohio, the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical United Brethren Church asked for a two or three year ban on the testing of nuclear weapons. The group also recommended extension of cultural exchanges between Russia and the United States to include clergymen, farmers, labourers and business executives. E.P.S., Geneva

Catholic-Protestant Dispute Over German Cathedral Ends

(Cologne, Germany) - Plans to re-establish a Cistercian abbey in Altenberg, near Cologne, and to use the cathedral there as the abbey church, have been cancelled by the Roman Catholic Church, ending a year-long conflict between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches in the Rhineland.

Protestants have regarded the proposed Catholic project as a violation of the official state agreement drawn up over a century ago, granting equal rights to both confessions in using the cathedral. The cathedral was restored by King Frederick William III on the condition that it should serve as a parish church for both Protestants and Catholics.

The announcement by Joseph Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, that the project had been abandoned, was hailed by Protestant leaders of the Rhineland as an "important contribution toward the preservation and strengthening of confessional peace". E.P.S., Geneva

German Government, Church Leader Consider Refugee Problem

(Kassel, Germany) - Better coordination of aid to refugees, expellees and repatriates has been urged by Bishop Reinhard Wester, the refugee programme commissioner for the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD).

Speaking at Kassel at a conference between EKD leaders and government representatives, Bishop Wester urged West German Christians "to turn good will into helpful deed lest the refugees from the East be forced toward nihilism because of disappointment and despair". The meeting was called to discuss the possibilities of a more efficient and rapid integration of refugees from the Soviet Zone into the social life of West Germany.

The government Minister for Refugee Affairs, Dr. Theodore Oberlaender, described the aid of refugees as "a sort of first installment toward the cost of German reunification".

Since 1949, two million residents of East Germany have come into West Germany. More than 261,000 crossed the border during 1957. About 78 per cent of the refugees have been Protestants and 15 per cent Roman Catholics.

E.P.S., Geneva

Committee Named for International Protestant Radio Station

(Zurich) - A sponsoring committee, made up of representatives of the Swiss national and free churches, has been formed to study and promote an international Protestant broadcasting station in Switzerland. The committee has already agreed on a general outline of the functioning of the planned broadcasting station. The proclamation of the Gospel is to be its only purpose. It is to be administered by a group of Christians "who profess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and who witness to the Bible as the guiding force of their faith and life".

The broadcasting station is planned to be at the disposal of churches and church institutions both from Switzerland and abroad. All programmes which might disturb relationships between different confessions or which might interfere with Swiss neutrality are excluded. The radio station will not have any commercial interests, and will be a non-profit-making organisation.

The members of the sponsoring committee feel that the Christian Church of today can no longer do without the use of modern technical inventions, such as press, film, radio and television, in order to expand and deepen Christian faith. They also point out there are already forty-five Protestant broadcasting stations outside Europe, whereas there is not a single one in Europe. In some European countries, they add, there are no Protestant radio programmes.

The General Assembly of the Swiss Protestant Federation discussed this project at last year's meeting in June. For financial and technical reasons it decided that at present it could not assume responsibility for a broadcasting station of this kind (see EPS Nos. 25 and 43, 1957). E.P.S., Geneva

Archbishop Makarios Gives Manuscript to US University

(Boston, Mass.) - Archbishop Makarios has given an ancient Greek manuscript of portions of the New Testament Gospels to Boston University's School of Theology.

The manuscript, believed to date from the tenth century, is from the archives of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Cyprus, and contains twenty-three chapters of Luke, six chapters of John, twelve chapters of Mark and three chapters of Matthew. E.P.S., Geneva

Swiss Canton Ends Ban on Catholic Teachers

(Herisau, Switzerland) - The tiny Swiss canton of Appenzell Outer Rhodes has ended an anti-Roman Catholic tradition that dated back to the sixteenth century by voting to make Catholic teachers eligible for posts in the communal schools.

In 1597, when the Reformation split the canton of Appenzell into the Protestant Outer Rhodes and the Catholic Inner Rhodes, Catholics were barred from teaching in the schools of the Protestant area. The vote admitting Catholic teachers in Outer Rhodes schools was 1,654 to 1,254. E.P.S., Geneva

EKD Lists Points for "Encounter with Foreigners"

(Frankfurt) - In view of the growing number of foreign workers and students in Germany, the Foreign Office of the Evangelical Church in Germany has issued a brochure stressing the necessity for a more responsible attitude towards the newcomers.

Among other things, the brochure, entitled "Nine Points Concerning Our Encounter With Foreigners", contains the following statement: "Most non-Christian foreigners come from countries and areas where the churches have been engaged in missionary work for a number of years. In spite of all their sad experiences with European colonial governments, most of them are under the impression that in our continent there are only Christian countries and Christian people!

"When, later on, they come to our countries they are very surprised that our economic and political life bear so little witness to the fact that they are part of the life of an almost 100 per cent Christian population. To start with, the only thing we can do in such a situation is to show these foreigners, by our simple human relationships with them and our readiness to help them and make them feel at home, that we are interested in them as persons and not as objects of our missionary activities.

"Experience has shown that these personal contacts may very well lead to serious and frank discussions about the Christian faith and other religions. However, the mere fact that in our country we have a large number of foreigners does not mean at all that it is God's will that we should make every effort to 'convert' them. It means a great deal if, just through their personal encounter with us, these young people from abroad feel something of the power of love by which, almost two thousand years ago, the early Christian Church turned the world upside down."

E.P.S., Geneva

In Brief

Two officials of the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination made a week's tour of Yugoslavia late in March. There are about 60,000 Adventists in Yugoslavia, served by forty-four ministers in 112 churches. Leaders of the Serbian Orthodox Church have noted recently the "increased activity" of the Adventist and other non-Orthodox groups in the country.

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Four hundred different titles have been published by the Council on Christian Literature for Overseas Chinese in Hong Kong during its six years of activity. While Hong Kong is still a principal market for literature sales of council-produced work, sixty per cent of the goods go overseas, chiefly to Formosa and Malaya.

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From April 7 to 13 the Ecumenical Community of Liturgical Choir Singers from Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Luxemburg will meet for the second time in Uppsala, Sweden. Each choir taking part in this congress will present typical music and liturgy, giving an opportunity for comparison and study.

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March 5 was marked by two events at Libamba, in the Cameroons. The joint College of the Presbyterian Church and the Evangelical Church of the Cameroons was inaugurated, and the new chapel was dedicated. The ceremony was held according to the liturgy of the French Reformed Church, and among those present were a number of church representatives.

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Methodist Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri, one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches, has recently visited the Protestant churches in Italy. He lectured on Methodism at the Theological Faculty of the Waldensian Church at Rome, and spoke to several Methodist parishes in different areas of Italy, and in the Waldensian valley of Piedmont.

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The Protestant Centre of Mass Media Techniques in Paris is planning a catalogue of religious records and slides on French Protestantism. Speeches and lectures will be recorded, and put at the disposal of Protestant parishes. The centre will also be responsible for establishing contacts with professional groups in the field of the cinema.

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The Rev. Federico Vincenzo of the Pentecostal Church of Raffadali, in Sicily, has been denounced by the Italian Public Prosecutor for holding a marriage ceremony for a couple whose civil marriage was registered in another parish in the same district. According to the Federal Council of Evangelical Churches, the denunciation, the first of its kind, violates Article 26 of a 1930 regulation providing that a Protestant minister is allowed to perform marriage ceremonies in either the parish where he lives or in the parish where the couple will live.

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During 1957 at least one complete book of the Bible was published for the first time in eighteen new languages, according to an announcement from the United Bible Societies. This brings the total number of languages in which at least a book has been published to 1,127.

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Mrs. Dorothy Garrett, wife of the Rev. John Garrett, director of the Ecumenical Press Service, died in Geneva on March 25. E.P.S., Geneva

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